

THE ORDER OF SALVATION (Ordo Salutis)

With God being outside of time as we know it there is no way to set an order of sequence to things in such a way as to preclude there being any other possible sequence. However as human beings we need this ordering to help us understand things. We can also with some certainty arrange the different things that happen in God's salvation of His people in a sequence because any other sequence will either not agree with Scripture or cause problems elsewhere in our theology (study of God – what we believe). I think that all of the events we list as being part of the order of salvation can happen so fast with God that we cannot measure them. Nonetheless speaking as a man there is a sequence of events.

The steps of salvation then are these:

REGENERATION: Man is conceived and born in sin. The Bible clearly and definitely states that not one single person has ever sought God. The Holy Spirit enables man to hear the call of God by replacing his heart of stone with a heart of flesh to use the words of the Bible. This regeneration allows man to hear and accept God's word as truth. Since belief requires faith we must say then that the gift of faith accompanies regeneration. There is a sequence here because without regeneration Man would not be able to receive the gift of faith. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit will also accompany regeneration because without the Holy Spirit residing within the believer the new heart would be subject to corruption by the devil. Christ says that you must first bind the strong man before you can enter his home to spoil his goods. Left to his own means man could not stop the devil from destroying the regenerated heart. However the presence of the Holy Spirit whom none can bind ensures that the new heart will prevail.

JUSTIFICATION: Justification is a one time forensic or legal declaration by God that the regenerate heart by faith is righteous. Not that the person is ever righteous as such but that the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to the believer. As Adam's sin was imputed to all to follow him because he represented all mankind so the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers.

SANCTIFICATION: Sanctification indicates a cleaning or renewal of the person. Because the will of man is still within man he can never be perfectly clean in this life. Likewise man is justified just as he is when the gift of faith is imparted and man turns from his former ways. Sanctification unlike justification then is a continuing process that will continue throughout life in the flesh whereby day by day a person becomes more like Christ. This process will only be complete in the eternal life to come when the sinful nature of the person is left in the grace at the resurrection.

PERSEVERANCE: What God begins God will complete. The ability to remain in faith and to reach the final goal and complete sanctification is also a gift of God. God begins, maintains, and will end the whole process; nothing is left to chance or the weakness of mere flesh.

GLORIFICATION: Glorification is when the faithful are received into the presence of Christ forever at the end of time. We are glorified to the glory of God the father and thus bring to conclusion God's purpose in creating all things in the beginning, His own glory.

Questions:

1. Why bother to try and set a sequence to salvation?
2. Why is regeneration thought to be the first step? (Romans 7:18)
3. The Bible speaks of our being judged according to our works, how does this relate to our being justified once, forever by God? (Revelation 20:13)
4. Why can sanctification never be perfect while we are in the flesh? (Romans 7:18)
5. Why is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit a necessity? (Mark 3:27)
6. How does our being glorified bring glory to God?
7. Why is the maintaining of perseverance not left with man?
8. How is a person justified? (Ephesians 2:8-10)
9. What does it mean to be justified?
10. To what major division of the order of salvation do we attach the gift of faith?
11. Can a true believer sin? (Romans 7:15)
12. What effect does sin have in/on the life of a true believer?
13. Why should a believer be able to answer questions like this? (2 Timothy 2:15)

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